THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some specific areas of collaboration include:

(i) Distribution through the Tobacco Board of pure seeds produced by CTRI to commercial nurseries and growers;

(ii) Distribution to FCV tobacco growers of pure and healthy seedlings produced in CTRI farms;

(iii) Dissemination by the Tobacco Board of the latest research findings of CTRI to growers by conducting training programmes, video shows, study tours and on farm trials.

(c) These extension activities benefit the farmer by providing seeds/seedling of high yeilding disease resistant varieties of FCV/burley tobacco, imparting training and exposure to latest research findings in the area of tobacco cultivation.

Threat Posted by Sri Lanka to Indian in European Tea Market

5116. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lanka is posing a seritus threat to India in the European tea market; and

(b) if so, what steps have been or are being taken to meet this threat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Sri Lanka is a traditional competitor of India in the international tea market. There is, however, no serious threat to the Indian tea from Sri Lanka in the European market;

In order to improve our market share in Europe, promotional capaigns for Indian tea are undertaken from time to time through Tea Board's offices at London and Brussels. Steps taken in this direction include participation in trade fairs|exhibitions; media capaign to increase consumer awareness towards various unique characteristics of Indian tea; media campaign to popularise Indian tea through Tea Board marketing symbol; and support to various foreign brands containing Indian tea. Tea Board have also undertaken brand promotion scheme to popularise classic Indian tea abroad and also have launched a Darjeeling and Assam Logo campaign in U. K.

The Govt. have also token the following measures to facilitate tea exports:-

(i) FOB sale of tea in London auctions has been allowed whereby exporters do not have to physically shift the teas to London before the actions as hitherto.

(ii) System of CIF off shore sale of Indian tea at London actions has also been approved which covers also the Europeon market.

Inclusion of Tobacco in thrust Area for Export Promotion

5117. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco will be included in the thrust area for export promotion;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) how Government propose to obtain an increasing share of the growing overseas market for tobacco?